

Parenting the First Year

Months 8-9

How Baby Is Changing

By now your baby is developing quite a personality. He will let you know he does not like a certain food by keeping his lips closed or turning his head away from the food. He looks at you when you call his name.

Your baby might sit up alone for longer periods of time and pull himself up to a standing position while holding onto furniture.

Your baby probably won't be taking as many naps as he used to. He might make it through the day with only one or two naps.

Your baby may be starting to become fearful of strangers. If someone he doesn't know approaches him, he may cling to you, cry or turn away from that person. Don't force him to go to the person. Let him watch how you talk to and feel comfortable with the person. The fact that your baby becomes fearful is actually a good sign. It means he has formed a strong attachment to you. In time he won't be as fearful.

When playing with toys, your child will be able to grasp the toy and transfer it from one hand to the other. He enjoys banging toys like a small drum or wooden blocks.

Your child enjoys seeing himself in a mirror. Sit in front of the mirror with him. He'll enjoy seeing your face next to his.

Games Babies Play

Here are some games your baby may enjoy:

Hide and Seek —

Big brothers and sisters can do the hiding. You can say, "Where is _____?" Help your baby find the missing person.

How Big is Baby? So Big! —

At first you might need to gently show your baby how to raise her arms up over her head while you say, "So big."

Hiding Things — Let your baby watch as you hide a small toy under a cloth or cup or in your pocket. Does she try to find it?

Music Fun — Your baby will like listening to many kinds of music with you and trying to dance. Inexpensive music boxes can be fun. She can learn to start and stop the music all by herself. Make sure the music box is safe for your baby (no small parts that could easily be removed).

Child Guidance

Your baby can't talk yet, but he is starting to learn that words have meanings. You can use this to help discourage undesirable behavior.

If your baby is crawling toward your slippers and you know they'll go into his mouth, say, "Tastes yucky," and move him to a different spot.

If he tries to touch the oven, move him away and say, "Hot."

Don't just say, "No," to things your baby does. Give him one- or two-word explanations to help him learn why he can't behave in certain ways.

As he gets older, make explanations a little longer, using three or four words instead of one or two.

Your baby's memory is not like yours. Remember how many tries it took him to learn pat-a-cake or peek-a-boo? Don't expect him to learn to stay away from dirty slippers or hot stoves because you tell him once or even 20 times.

Your Baby Wants You To Know by the End of Nine Months

How I Grow

- I may crawl backward and forward on my stomach.
- I hold onto a toy, such as a rattle, for several minutes.
- I pick up small things (coins, string, bugs, etc.) and put them in my mouth, so watch me carefully.

How I Talk

- I let you know if I am happy, sad or scared by the sounds I make.
- I still babble a lot and shout to get attention.
- I may recognize some words.
- I watch and try to imitate your mouth movements.

How I Respond

- I like to pat and kiss my reflection in the mirror.
- I turn and listen when I hear familiar sounds, such as the telephone or my name.
- I love to imitate people I know.

How I Understand

- I am very curious, and I want to explore everything.
- I know how to solve simple problems, such as making a toy bell ring.
- I remember events that just happened.

How I Feel

- I am frightened by new experiences and by new people.
- I may be upset when you leave me, even for a short time.
- I feel relieved when you return. (Some babies show this less than others.)
- I can get upset easily when many people make a fuss over me.
- I may get frustrated or lose my temper when you take something away from me.

How You Can Help Me Learn

- Read books to me. Point out pictures of things I see each day. For example, show me a picture of a ball and give me my toy ball at the same time.
- Hide a small toy under a cup or cloth for me to find.
- Take me for a walk outside to see leaves and flowers or icicles and snowmen!
- Sing songs to me.
- Repeat books, songs and activities to me over and over.

He or She, Him or Her

These newsletters give equal time to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." Keep in mind that we are talking about all children when we use "he" or "she."

REMINDER: Your baby should have a health-care provider visit at 9 months of age.

Children are very different from each other. Don't worry if your child manages some skills earlier or later than other children. Most children tend to focus on one area, like physical or language development, and pay less attention to other areas. Get to know your unique baby and celebrate each new skill with him!



Car Safety

- Babies should stay in rear-facing safety seats until they're 1-year-old. If you think your baby will be 20 pounds before age 1, get a car seat that can be rear-facing for babies weighing 30 to 35 pounds.
- Follow manufacturer's directions for the safety seat. The back seat is safest. Never place a child in a car seat in the front seat of vehicles with passenger-side air bags.
- Do not use car seats that are more than six years old, that have been in a crash or that have missing parts.
- Register your car seat with the manufacturer so you can be notified of any recalls. New car seats come with a registration card. For recall information on used car seats, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2286 (Press 1).
- If your baby is outgrowing the infant safety seat, call the same number for information about toddler seats.

Car crashes are the most serious threat to your baby's safety. Most crashes happen close to home and at low speeds. To keep your family safe in the car:

- Use your baby's car seat for *every* ride. It won't protect her if she isn't in it.
- All passengers and the driver should wear seat belts.
- Don't allow yelling, horseplay or other distractions when you drive. If your child needs attention, pull off the road and stop. *Never turn around in your seat when you're driving.*
- Never let children play with the car controls, including locks and door handles, even when the car is parked.
- Keep a flashlight, first-aid kit and emergency flares in the car.
- On long trips, provide quiet games to keep children busy. Tape-recorded stories or favorite songs are good, too.
- Stop every two hours. Don't try to go too far in one day.
- Never leave children alone in a car, even for a few minutes.

Sibling Rivalry

As your child grows and becomes more mobile, the number of conflicts between your baby and his brothers and sisters may increase. Your baby is crawling now and may be walking soon. He may get into everyone's things, and siblings may lose patience easily.

Explain to siblings how he is growing and learning. He doesn't get into things to cause trouble or be mean on purpose. He needs to be guided as to what he can and cannot play with. Help older children baby-proof their areas and keep important items out of the baby's reach.

One book that can help you with sibling problems is called *Siblings Without Rivalry* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. Here are some of the book's important points for healthier sibling relationships:

- Brothers and sisters need to have their feelings about each other recognized.
- All feelings need to be accepted. Hurtful actions need to be stopped.
- Comparing children has a negative effect on their self-esteem. Resist the urge.
- Treat children as individuals. Instead of giving equal amounts of time, food, energy, money, etc., give according to individual needs.

Adding a baby to the family means changes and adjustments for everyone at each new stage of the baby's life.

Playing Rough

Most babies love active play, but keep it safe. A few games *are* too dangerous to play with babies.

Never throw your baby into the air. She could fall if something distracts you. Instead, lift her over your head without letting go.

Never jerk a baby's arm. Swinging her around in a circle while holding her by the hands puts too much stress on her elbows and shoulders. These joints could be dislocated. If you hold her under the arms by the chest, turn her slowly only a few times.

Some fun and safe ways to play with your baby are chasing her as she crawls and gently rolling her along the floor. Stop when your baby wants to stop.

Never Shake a Baby

Shaking, jerking, jolting and slamming can cause blood vessels in a baby's head to tear or burst. This whiplash motion can result in bleeding inside the head with no outward sign of abuse. The neck muscles of an infant are weak, and the child's head is heavy, so the neck cannot support the stress of shaking.

Shaking a baby can cause irreversible brain damage, blindness, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, spinal cord injury, seizures, learning disabilities and even death.

If you are frustrated or angry with your baby:

1. Put your baby in a safe place like the crib.
2. Give yourself a break.
3. Call someone.

Sleep Problems

One of the most frustrating and common problems parents have is getting your baby to sleep. Eight-month-old children may have trouble settling down to sleep. They're so excited about sitting, creeping, crawling and exploring that they don't want to go to bed!

Parents need time to themselves. Don't feel guilty about wanting to enjoy some peace and quiet or time with your partner. Your baby's bedtime is your decision.

Here are a few tips to make bedtime easier:

- Develop a bedtime routine. Routines (doing the same thing in the same way) help children settle down and build security.
- Spend some time each evening cuddling, reading, singing or talking to your baby at bedtime.
- Put your baby to bed at around the same time each night.
- Rock or cuddle with your baby right before bedtime, but put him in bed before he falls completely asleep. Eventually he will need to learn how to fall asleep by himself. Babies who usually fall asleep by themselves wake their parents half as often as babies who fall asleep with a parent present.
- Put a nightlight in your baby's room. Switching on a bright light for feeding, changing or comforting might make the child think it's time to get up.

When your baby cries after you put him to bed, respond promptly since your baby needs to learn that he can count on you, his parents. This secure attachment leads to later independence.

Be very matter-of-fact as you take care of him in the night. Don't worry about this spoiling him — babies this age cannot be spoiled. If he is O.K., pat him for a minute or two, talk to him softly, provide a favorite blanket or stuffed toy, and leave. If he continues to cry, check on him every two to three minutes so he can see that you haven't abandoned him. Try to offer comfort without picking him up.

You may choose to wait a few minutes before responding to your baby's first cry. He may quickly fall back asleep on his own.

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Reading to Baby

It's never too early to get into the habit of reading to your baby. Reading to your child is perhaps the most important thing you can do to encourage speech development and a love for learning throughout life.

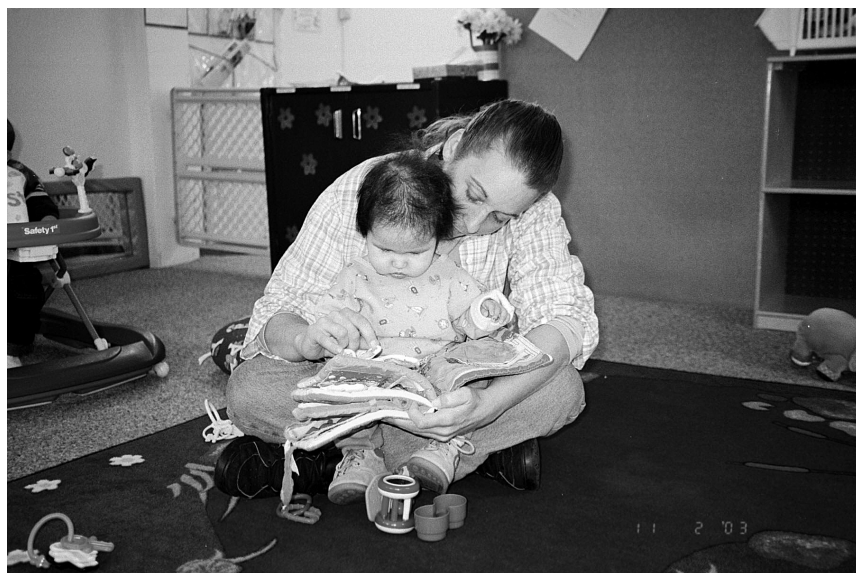
Pick a time when your baby might sit still for a while. Bedtime is good. Use books with big, colorful pictures. Don't worry about the story. You can just talk about the pictures or make up stories.

Babies like books with pictures of everyday things they know about, such as clothes, food, trees, cars and animals. Point to a picture and tell your baby about it: "Look, this is a kitty. Do you see the kitty? Kitty says 'meow.'"

Many books are available for babies this age. These books are made so they can survive being put into your baby's mouth, pulled and pounded. Cloth books, hard-page books and books that allow your baby to touch different textures, smell scents and hear sounds are interesting to your baby.

If there's not a library near you or you're limited in the number of books you can buy, try making your own. Keep safety in mind so your baby doesn't get cut or swallow anything harmful. Cover pages with clear adhesive plastic for protection. Here are suggestions for pages of your own books:

- Pictures of your baby, other family members and pets
- A small unbreakable mirror
- A picture of her favorite toy
- A picture of her favorite food
- A picture of plants or flowers like ones that grow nearby
- A bunny made from fake fur
- A piece of sandpaper
- Pictures of familiar things cut out from magazines



Toys Babies Love

Many parents notice that their babies sometimes prefer simple household items to expensive, store-bought toys.

Your baby may be overwhelmed by too many new play-things. Add one new toy at a time.

Here are some suggestions for babies 5 to 12 months old:

- Hats
- Measuring spoons, cups and plastic mixing bowls of various sizes
- Colorful pot holders
- Clean empty plastic bottles without caps
- Cardboard boxes of different sizes
- Strainers and colanders
- Plastic containers with colorful lids; objects to put in and to take out
- Beach ball
- Unbreakable mirror with no sharp edges
- Soft objects such as sponges or socks rolled into a ball
- Sofa cushions on the floor
- Paper lunch sacks for hiding objects in, carrying and scrunching
- Plastic cookie cutters
- Plastic travel containers with small lids removed
- Plastic buckets



Prevent Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

Even though your baby will lose her baby teeth, it is important to keep teeth healthy. Baby teeth save space in the mouth for permanent teeth. Losing baby teeth too soon can lead to crowding of the permanent teeth.

As soon as teeth appear in the mouth, tooth decay can occur. A serious form of decay among young children is called early childhood caries (cavities). The sugar in formula, milk, juice and sweetened drinks can decay the teeth if it stays in the mouth during sleep. Bacteria in your baby's mouth react with sugar to make acid. While she sleeps, more of the acid stays on the teeth to cause cavities. If your child needs a bottle as a comforter between regular feedings, at night, or during naps, fill the bottle with cool water.

To protect your baby's teeth, the American Dental Association recommends you:

- Clean your baby's teeth after meals with a clean gauze pad or small soft-bristled toothbrush. No toothpaste is necessary until around age 2.
- Provide a balanced diet. Avoid giving presweetened cereal.
- Offer only clean pacifiers. They should not be dipped in honey, other sweets or another person's mouth.
- Put only water in your child's nap or bedtime bottle.



Baby Food Safety Tips

Choking:

Food such as nuts, raisins, hard candies, popcorn, hard carrots, seeds and crumbly cookies are hard for your baby to eat and can cause choking. Grapes and round pieces of hot dogs are especially dangerous. If giving hot dogs, cut in half the long way and then into small pieces. Toddlers don't outgrow this tendency to choke on foods until they are 4.

In addition, if your toddler is sitting down when she eats, she is less likely to choke. Never let your toddler play, run around or lie down with food in her mouth.

Cooking:

- Wash your hands before feeding your baby, preparing food or handling raw meats.
- Always wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water, even if the skin won't be eaten.
- Always cook egg yolk thoroughly. (Because of possible allergies, your baby shouldn't eat egg whites until 12 months of age.)
- Heat any left-over cold cuts or hot dogs to 165 degrees before eating.
- Drink only pasteurized juice.
- Use safe food handling practices.

Right Track

Right Track is a free program for families with children from birth through age 2 that provides children with the best possible start. Right Track provides developmental screenings, ideas for stimulating your child's development, information and referrals to local, state and national organizations. Call 800.755.8529 to learn more about Right Track.

Building Self-Esteem

There is no magic formula for raising a confident and capable child. But parents play a very important part in making their child feel loved, important and successful. It's never too early to start practicing these steps:

- Give affection. Hold, hug, kiss, etc. Tell her you love her.
- Set the example. Do the best you can and be proud of what you have done. We all make mistakes and need to admit to them. Do the best you can with what you know, and never be afraid to ask for help.
- Never withhold love. Keep the attitude that you may not like everything your child does, but you will always love her. Never tell her that if she doesn't listen, you won't love her.
- Have a safe and simple home. Children don't need expensive things. They need your time and attention.
- Keep your relationship with your partner alive. Avoid getting overly involved with your child and neglecting your partner. One of the best gifts you can give your child is to love and respect your partner.
- Respect feelings and differences. Your child won't be a carbon copy of you. Don't expect your child to succeed at all the things you did or didn't succeed at. Realize that you are living with a unique person and that it's O.K. for her to be different from you.
- Teach self-control. Your example is the most powerful teacher. Learn to handle the stress and anger in your life. Never take your anger out on your child.
- Encourage instead of criticize. When problems occur, show or explain what you think should be done instead, and be patient. Don't yell, scream and criticize your child. Guide her in the right direction. We all need to be told things many times when we are learning something new.
- Have reasonable expectations. If you expect too much from your child, she may become frustrated. If you're not sure what is reasonable to expect, ask a professional, read a book about the ages and stages of child development or take a parenting class.



Wanted: A Nonviolent Home

An estimated one-third of America's children has witnessed or is aware of violence within their family. This is a place where children should feel cared for and protected. Even if the children in these homes aren't being physically abused, they are affected by what they see happening.

Reactions of children to violence in the home can vary in severity and according to the child's age. An infant may express herself with irritability, a lot of crying and sleep problems. With toddlers and school-age children, there may be a lot of hair pulling, headaches and nail biting.

Girls who see their parents hitting each other may be likely to be beaten themselves when they grow up and enter into their own relationships. Boys who see their mother beaten are more likely to be violent against women later in their lives. Children also may be at a greater risk of accidental injuries or child abuse and neglect.

Children in violent families need to learn that there are other ways besides hitting as a way to solve problems. There are North Dakota laws that protect adults and children from family violence and community organizations and state agencies that offer emergency shelter, counseling and support. If you were raised in a family where hitting and violence were acceptable, help is available. Call HELP-LINE at 800.472.2911 for locations and telephone numbers of these services in your area.



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

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Help Is Out There

Family-to-Family Network

Family-to-Family Network is a statewide volunteer organization that unites families facing similar life issues of having a child with special health-care needs or disabilities.

Experienced families serve as “veteran families,” providing a unique resource for other families with children who have recently been diagnosed with a disability or chronic illness or families experiencing special life challenges as a result of dealing with a disability.

The Family-to-Family match provides emotional support and understanding, shared experiences, and support in accessing resources.

If you would like more information about the Family-to-Family Network of North Dakota, please call 888.434.7436, email F2F@medicine.nodak.edu, or visit www.medicine.nodak.edu/crh.



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